

New Jersey Cunningham article

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LET'S EXPLORE---

The Poconos and Shawnee Valley



Rugged slopes flanking Delaware Water Gap viewed from point south of Stroudsburg. Jersey's Mt. Tammany is at left and Mt. Minsi on Pennsylvania side.

BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

JUST West of the Delaware River are the Poconos, symbol of relaxation in everything from "Kitty Foyle" to the writings of world-famed travelers. The beauties of the rugged mountains are extolled in thousands of pieces of literature designed to lure vacationists. Yet, somehow, to most Jerseyans the Poconos seem far away.

Some pleasant day, maybe today, you'll benefit if you point your car westward for a three-hour jaunt (certainly not more than four hours even in the oldest of "Old Faithfuls") to find out just how close are these storied lands. You can visit the Poconos and return up the west bank of the Delaware River in an easy day-trip or you can turn this into an overnight venture.

The story of colonization is the story of man against the elements. In the Pocono mountains the effort to earn a living was too much; man at first retreated from such a rock-strewn area to the easier life of the valleys, then returned to make the mountains an area for relaxation.

The gaunt structures of the early

Here is the first of a new series of picture-articles for Newark Sunday News readers who like to know what scenic and historic spots to seek when they take auto trips.

The trips to be described each Sunday during the Summer will be varied so that a comparatively long tour will be balanced by a short one, and only a moderate use of gasoline will be required.

The picture-articles, complete with a pictorial map, will appear each week in the center of the Gravure Magazine so that a special section (Pages 11 to 14) may be lifted out for use on a trip or for filing for later reference.

farms were replaced by palatial hotels, the logging roads by ski runs. Fences were even put up around nature's wonders so that owners could get revenue from onlookers.

Thus the Poconos became a vacation-land. There are a few factories that use the tremendous power of rushing mountain streams, but in general man has made the area a producer of pleasures.

FROM the minute you see the Delaware River flowing quietly under the frowning mountains of the Delaware

Water Gap until you've finished your tour of the Poconos you will see the struggle of nature. Everywhere water fights rock. Sometimes it oozes down solid cliffs, more often it rushes through rock-filled streams. It reaches its most imposing grandeur when mountains fall suddenly away and the water plunges hundreds of feet to form the majestic falls which abound in the area.

The fight becomes three-cornered when vegetation strikes back at both water and rock and, more often than not, wins. This is the phase of

nature's struggle which produces the towering trees and the rampant wild flowers. Most important, this is what produces the laurel and the rhododendron for which the Poconos are most famous from mid-June to mid-July.

Laurel and rhododendron are not everywhere at once. Best advice, according to those who live in the area, is to "ask where the laurel is blossoming today" to be certain of seeing the delicate pink laurel blossoms or the rich white rhododendrons. Laurel season is usually the last two weeks in June; rhododendrons bloom in the first two weeks in July.

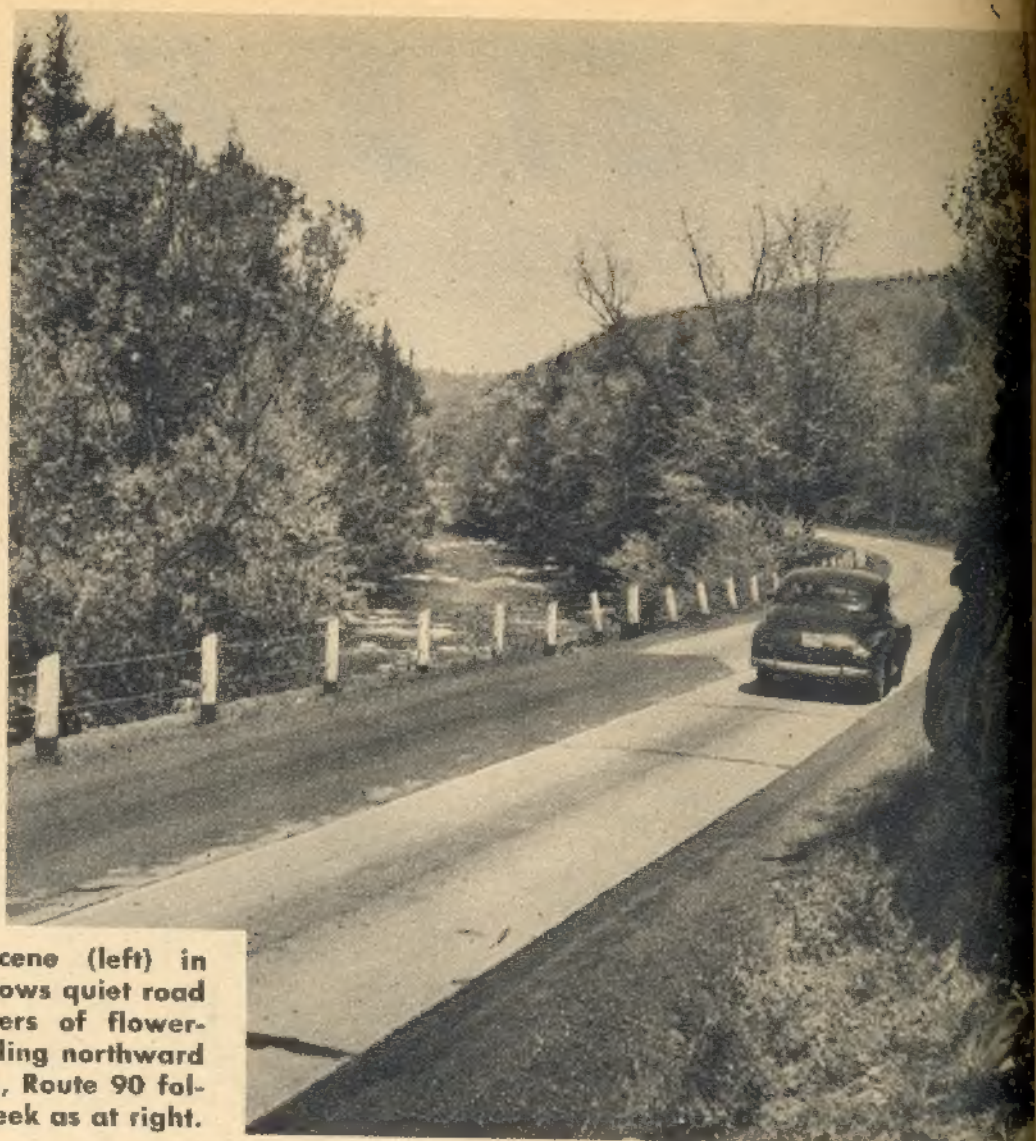
THE trip gets underway at Netcong and rolls westward along Route 6 through the scenic farmlands of Morris and Warren counties. Less than an hour away is the first glimpse of the Delaware. Route 6 crosses the Delaware and continues north, but the traveler is urged to cut off on Route 8 for the covered bridge three miles north between Columbia and Portland.

Built in 1869, the span is the last

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Typical rural scene (left) in Pocono region shows quiet road fringed by clusters of flowering laurel. Traveling northward from Stroudsburg, Route 90 follows Paradise Creek as at right.



Scenic Delights Abo

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remaining covered bridge along the Delaware River. Plans are being discussed to replace the wooden bridge with a newer structure and when this is done the bridge will be restricted to foot traffic.

Northward from Portland along Route 611 in Pennsylvania the rocky magnificence of the Delaware Water Gap dominates the river. Its rugged sloping sides tower to an elevation of 1,600 feet. New Jersey's share of the mountainous cleft is named Mt. Tammany (after an Indian Chief rather than the old New York political machine) while the Pennsylvania mountain is Minisi.

Clearly indicated in the rugged mountain sides is evidence of rock being crushed upward by unknown forces, probably at the same time the earth was cooling into shape. Some scientists say that a great inland lake once covered the region north of the Gap and the Indians of the region took the name "Minisink," meaning "the water is gone." However, the Gap as it is today is the work of water against stone for countless ages, with the river a decisive victor.

Over-the-shoulder glances after passing through the Gap will reward the traveler because the scenic vista changes constantly. The view from the north shows the wild rockiness of the south side replaced by tree-covered slopes which seem to fade into the river.

ROUTE 611, built on an old Indian trail through the Gap and along the mountains, leads directly into Stroudsburg after making a junction with Route 90. Stroudsburg took its name from Col. Jacob Stroud, who came to the Pocono region in 1745 from Amwell, N. J. The home he built in 1795 is preserved as a museum and library and can be seen by a left turn in Main street for two blocks. Route 90, pathway to the

Poconos, is two blocks to the right—east—of Route 611.

Seven miles north of the town in 90, Route 290 cuts off at an angle to the right where Brodhead's Creek crosses the highway. About two-thirds of Route 290 is well-paved, but a stretch of about five miles in the center is somewhat rough, although the macadam is hard and not pock-marked. The road's winding course along the sparkling creek necessitates moderate speeds, but the route guarantees the traveler 15 miles of country untouched by billboards. Even Summer cottages are few.

Route 290 winds into Canadensis, pivotal spot in the Eastern Poconos. A road to the right goes to Skytop, the dateline for many social and sport stories during the Winter months. The road to the left, Route 390, is of more immediate interest because it leads to Buck Hill Falls, about two miles to the west.

BUCK HILL FALLS is reached by a road which turns sharply right off 390 about a mile west of Canadensis. The clearly-marked road almost doubles back along Route 390. Most falls in the Poconos are privately-owned and fees ranging from 25 to 40 cents are charged for sight-seeing.

The traveler must agree that Buck Hill's falls have earned their international reputation for beauty. Two falls, totalling nearly a 200-foot drop, send tons of water thundering down into the deep tree-lined gorge. Nowhere is nature's battle more clearly shown. Trees 125-feet tall rise out of seemingly solid rock. Rhododendron matted over the cliff-like walls makes the gorge gleam with color in early July.

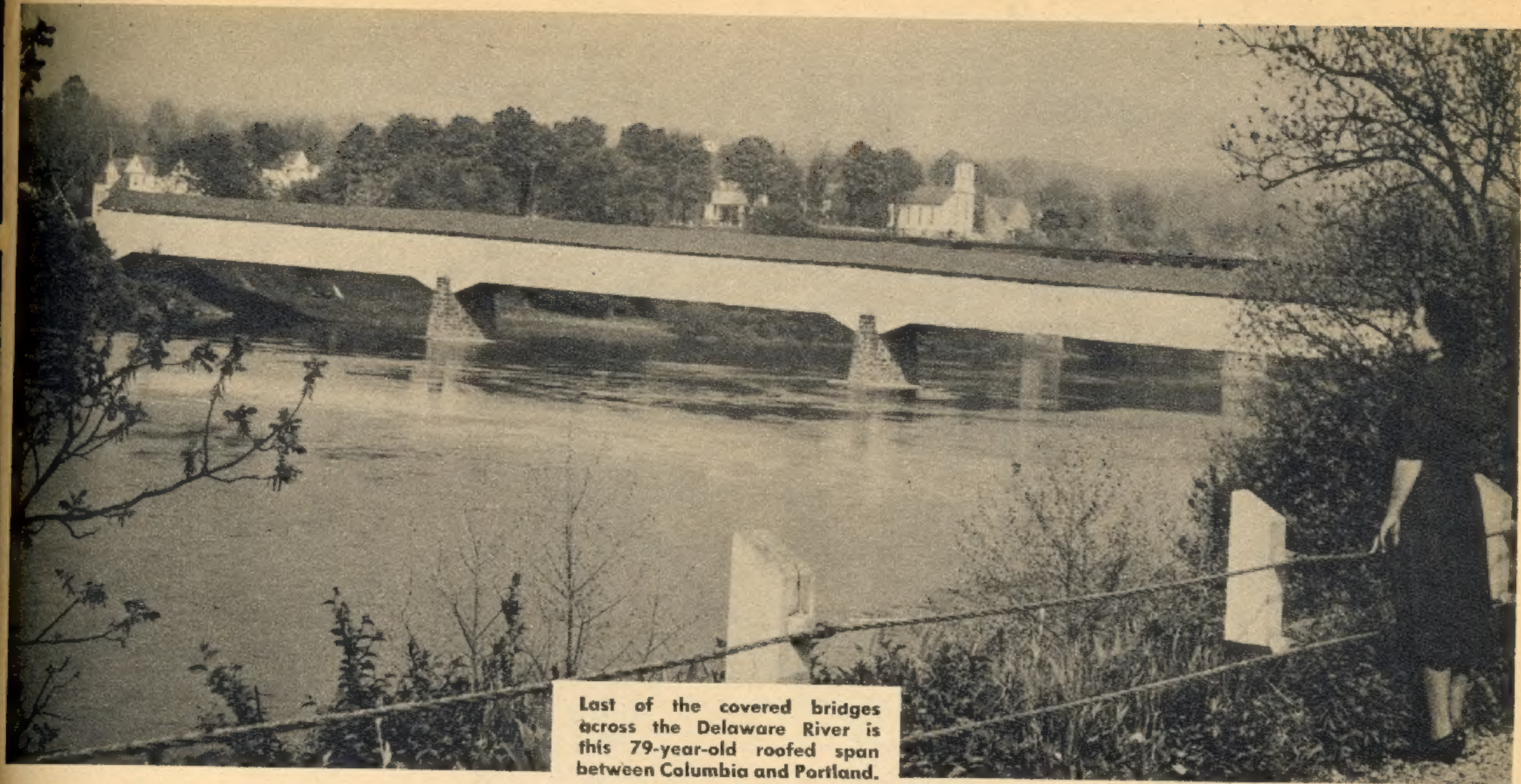
Back again in Route 390 the trail goes through Mountainhome and Cresco to Paradise, once the center of the Poconos. Here was established the first telephone center for the area and here the engineers were stationed for the railroad which made almost



From Pennsylvania side travelers can see Jersey mountains ranging upward from Delaware River which flows through Shawnee Valley.



Buttermilk Falls, one of few which can be viewed free of charge in Pocono area, splashes over rocks close to road near Minisink Hills.



Last of the covered bridges across the Delaware River is this 79-year-old roofed span between Columbia and Portland.

Land in Vacation-Land

even circle about the village. Here, too, congregated artists, writers and theatrical personages from Philadelphia and New York.

It was in a barn at Paradise that Joseph Jefferson worked out his dramatization of "Rip Van Winkle," which made stage history after the Civil War. Jefferson's adaptation of the Washington Irving story was first poorly received in Washington, and he had to take it around the world to London, where it ran for 175 performances, before he came home in triumph to New York. "Rip Van Winkle" was then an established success for years. The cottage where the Jeffersons lived for many Summers still stands at the main intersection in the village and his Summer kitchen is preserved.

A RIGHT TURN along Route 90 at Paradise will take the driver through a 20-mile loop encompassing three of the most familiar names in the Poconos: Mt. Pocono, Pocono Summit and Pocono Manor. Even if the loop seems like too far to drive, a trip to the "Knob" at Mt. Pocono is recommended. The "Knob," overlooking the valley with the Gap far in the background, is a half-mile down the first road to the left after crossing a railroad track 3½ miles west of Paradise.

Back in Stroudsburg the traveler can decide whether the Poconos are enough for one day or whether he wishes to return home through splendid farm country along the west bank of the Delaware. The latter will add about 35 miles on the way back to Netcong, but the round-trip total will be close to 175 miles.

Route 290, the street just beyond the turn previously made for Route 90 to the north, cuts into East Stroudsburg and to Shawnee Valley. A right turn off 290 is made just after the first bridge is crossed and the road winds eastward around East Stroudsburg Teachers College. Immediately

after north-bound Route 402 is crossed, rippling Buttermilk Falls, one of the few falls in the Poconos for which no charge is made, demand attention on the left.

THE road past the falls heads into Shawnee Valley, and offers a panorama of the entire Delaware River Valley north of the Gap. First settlers came to the valley across the river from the Old Mine Road in New Jersey. Nicholas Depuy, first known settler in Shawnee, arrived in 1727. Evidence of the close relationship with colonial New Jersey is seen in records from a store founded in Oxford, N. J., by Depuy's son. These show Pennsylvania farmers were served by the store.

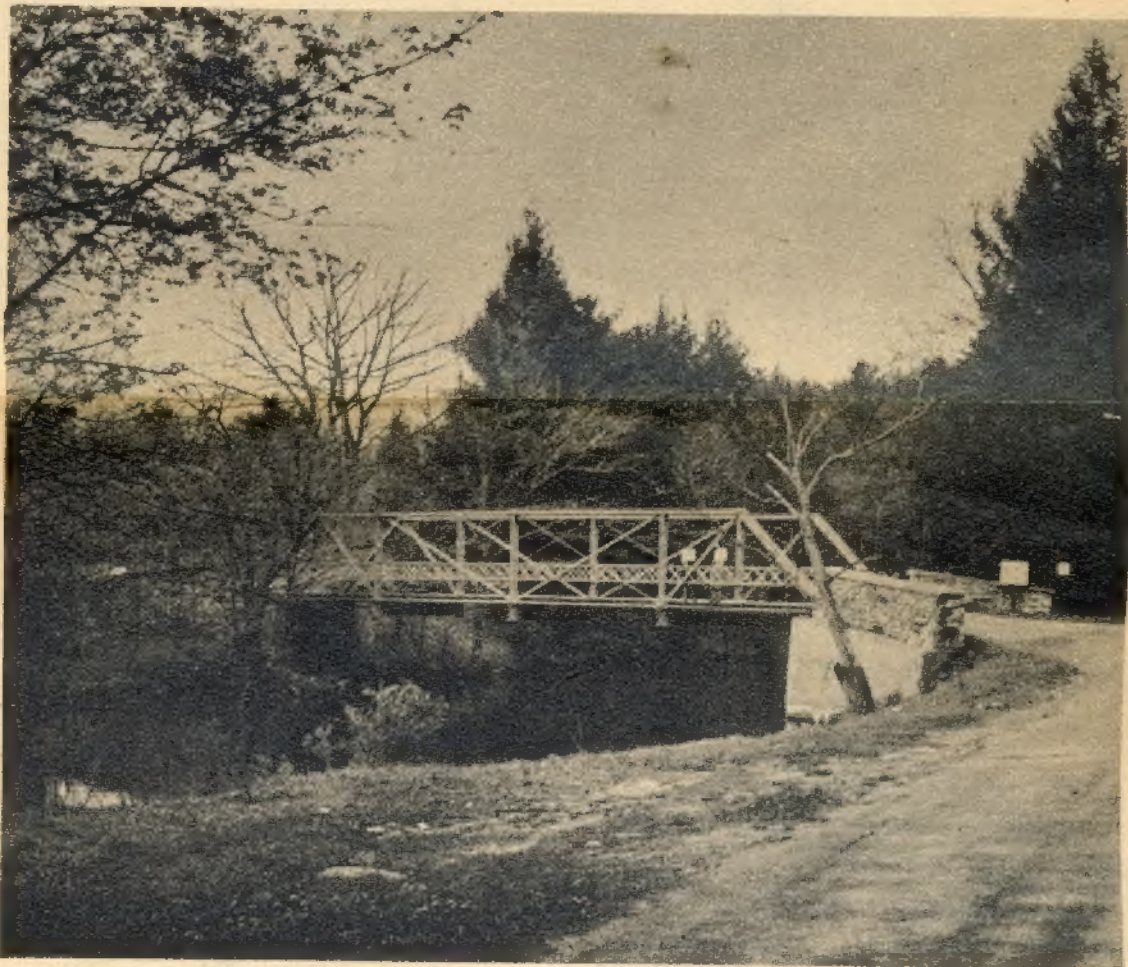
Nature smiled along the Delaware, where the sloping farmlands are rich and easily worked. Topsoil washed from the hills has enriched the flat lands and farmers have prospered. And yet, as the curving road progresses over gently rolling hills, the traveler will do well to remember that to his left is the wildest part of Monroe County. Wild life, including herds of deer and many bear, is said to have almost free run in the mountain peaks.

Bushkill Falls, to the left off Route 209, are worth a visit (for a 40-cent fee) and further north, near the bridge back across the river at Dingman's Ferry, are other falls. The old privately-owned bridge at Dingman's is the only means of crossing the river between Portland and Milford. The toll is 25 cents for a car.

Once two small ferries crossed the river at different spots, but the war stopped operations. Now even traces of them have been almost completely swallowed up by the Delaware.

The road from Dingman's bridge on the Jersey side winds directly into Route 31 and the traveler will taper off on rural scenes in Sussex County as he heads south for Newton and Netcong.

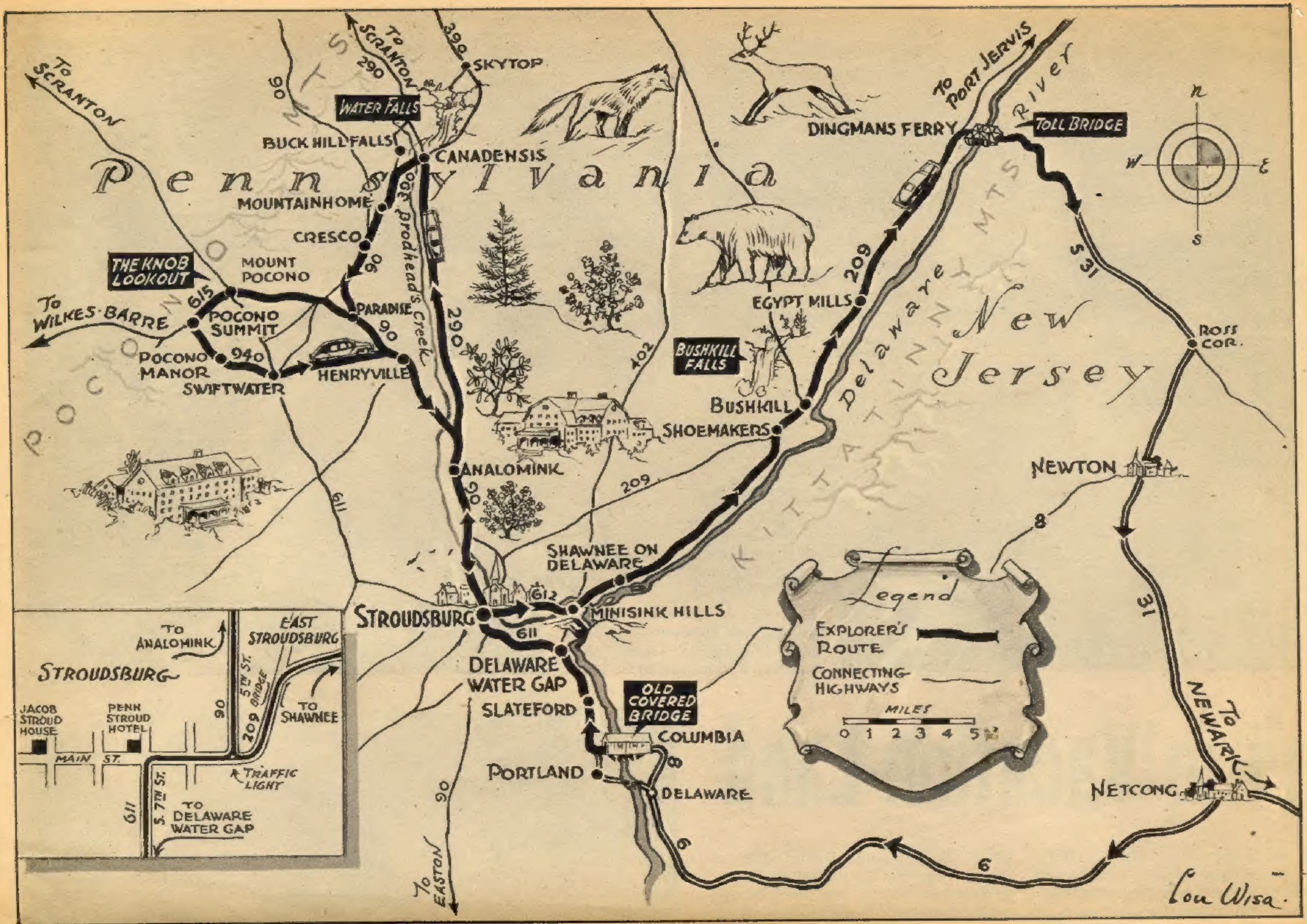
(Turn Page for Map of Tour)



Quiet riverside scene in country untouched by billboards along Brodhead's Creek which flows along Route 290, south of Canadensis.



Aptly named Paradise Falls which flows smoothly over great rock mounds near the town of that name on Route 90 in the Pocono "loop."



LET'S EXPLORE

(Continued)

Outlined in above map is course of easy day trip or overnight venture for Poconos tour and return via west bank of Delaware River. At right: J. P. Stapff, formerly of Newark, looks at outdoor kitchen in rear of Summer home occupied by Joseph Jefferson of "Rip Van Winkle" fame and family at Paradise Falls.

BAND NIGHT

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